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Public health education soars in wake of pandemic

April 5, 2021



Gulzar Shah, Ph.D., department chair and professor of health policy and community health in Georgia Southern University's Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health

Maybe a silver lining can be found from the COVID-19 pandemic, as interest in public health education is soaring at U.S. colleges and universities, says a nationally prominent public health professor.

Public health education has become a logical choice for students when looking at changing public health practice trends and their implications for public health education, explained Gulzar Shah, Ph.D., who authored an invited editorial in the March issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* (AJPH).

Shah is department chair and professor of health policy and community health in Georgia Southern University's Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health. His editorial is titled "[Public Health Education and Changing Public Health Realities in the Public Health 3.0 Era.](#)"

"For many of the 19 million college students enrolling annually in public and private colleges in the United States, public health is becoming a logical choice," he said. "Because of COVID-19, interest in public health careers is soaring, evident from the 20% increase nationwide in Master of Public Health applicants."

The editorial also drew insights from the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health's national-level data from schools and programs of public health about the first employment destinations of public health graduates.

"The emphasis on aligning public health practice and policy with the Public Health 3.0 framework, in which leaders partner across various sectors to address social, environmental and economic factors that affect population health and health inequity, has attracted the spotlight on generalist, behavioral education and health policy degrees," Shah noted. "The Public Health 3.0 framework has also underscored the desirability of adopting the Health in All Policies approach and encouraging public health leaders to act as chief health strategists in influencing policies in other sectors affecting population health. Increasing focus on Health in All Policies and higher salary positions in health care may further explain the popularity of health policy and management and health law programs."

Shah's research studies were based on two waves of the national-level Public Health Workforce Interest and Needs Survey.

The AJPH is the prominent monthly journal of the American Public Health Association, dedicated to publishing original work in research, research methods and program evaluation in the field of public health.

All published papers have undergone rigorous peer review. Each month, the most influential public health professionals around the world turn to AJPH for the most current, authoritative, in-depth information in the field.

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